

The Blessing of PEACE.

Set forth in a

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S E R M O N,

PREACHED ON

Tuesday July the 7th, 1713.

Being the Day appointed for a

PUBLICK THANKSGIVING,

For the Conclusion of a

Just and Honourable PEACE,

BETWEEN

Her Most Excellent Majesty the QUEEN
of *Great-Britain*, and the *French* KING.

By W. BEAR, Vicar of *Abbotsbam*, Devon.

EXON: Printed by Sam. Farley, for Edward Score,
Bookseller, over-against the *Guil'd-Hall*, in the *High-Street*. 1713.

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SEERMON

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Twelfth July the 1713.

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Just and Noble Peace.

1713

Her Most Excellent Majesty the QUEEN
of Great Britain, and her Privy COUNCIL.

By W. B. A. R. Viceroy of the Kingdom of Great Britain.

Printed by J. K. for the Author, in the City of London, 1713.

PSALM XXIX. I I.

*The Lord will give Strength to his People,
the Lord will bless his People with Peace.*

TIS the Saying of the Wise-Man, That, *As cold Waters to a thirsty Soul, so is good News from a far Country.* Such (my Brethren) is the *Refreshing Tidings* that we have lately receiv'd; which now so lovingly invites our Rejoycings, and so loudly calls for our Gratitude, The Restauration of a publick Peace to these Kingdoms: The deep Sense of the Want of which Blessing, its *slow Approaches* in coming (when it hath so often seem'd to be within our View) and our *Repeated Fears* of being even at last disappointed of our Hopes, have but the more inflam'd our Desires, and made us even sick of Love towards it.

BUT, tho' Hope deferr'd, maketh the Heart sick; when the Desire cometh, it is a Tree of Life. Blessed be God! What hath been long look'd for, is come at last. Welcome, thrice welcome, this happy Stranger, to our Coasts! The black and dismal Cloud of a Twenty Years War, is at last happily dispers'd; and the blessed Sun-shine of a Joyful Peace, begins to smile upon our Tabernacles: A Blessing more desirable in it self, than the greatest Successes of a Continued War.

FOR, indeed, War at the best, is but a *Necessary Evil*: And the greatest *Victories*, obtain'd by the shedding of much Blood, are far from being truly Good or Glorious in themselves; only as they may tend to the obtaining of *that*, which must be the proposed End of every Lawful War, *viz.* a Just and

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Honourable Peace. And, when such an End could be obtained, we find, all her fresh Laurels, repeated Victories, and Successes, could not tempt a Just and Merciful Princess, to keep a Bloody and Devouring Sword unsheathed any longer. Which plainly shows, that her Royal Breast is endued with a Genius Superior to other Conquerors; and (as the Proverb goes) *uncommon to her own Nation, She knows when 'tis Enough*: And can be as ready to give Peace to a Reduc'd Enemy, upon Fair and Honourable Terms, as she hath been forward to give large Assurances to injur'd Allies, till such Terms could be obtained. In a Word, that she can conquer her self, as well as her Enemies; being willing, that farther Opportunities of taking severer Revenge, and obtaining greater Glories, (as some would 'count it) should be laid aside, and exchanged for a safe and advantageous Peace for all her Subjects.

THIS is the great Blessing that we are this Day to commemorate; that God hath been pleased to fulfil to us, what he hath here promised by the Psalmist, *He will give Strength, &c.*

THIS Psalm (according to the literal Sense of it) contains an earnest Exhortation to the Praising of God for his infinite Power and Goodness, for his Power in raising, and for his Goodness and Mercy in preserving his People from the great Danger of violent Storms and Tempests; such as Thunder, Lightenings, and Over-flowing Waters: Which he here (like a Divine Poet) most elegantly describes, by the Almighty's uttering his Voice, dividing the Flames of Fire, and sitting upon the Floods of Water. These are, as it were, the loud and terrible Artilleries of Heaven; but he that is King both of Heaven and Earth, presides over all, and preserves his People. From hence the Holy Psalmist raises his Contemplations higher, and reflects on the wonderful Mercies of God, in delivering him and his People from the greater Dangers of *Metaphor*

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rical Storms and Tempests, viz. *In Time of War, and in the Day of Battle.* He not only stilleth the Raging of the Sea, and the Noise of his Waters, but also the Tumults or Madness of the People: *He will give Strength to his People, he will Bless his People with Peace.*

IN which Words, we have the Promise of a Two-fold Blessing to God's Church and People, i. e. Victory and Peace: Both of which, the Almighty hath been pleased, in a great Measure, to bestow upon us, tho' so unworthy of the Name of his People.

I. *Victory: He will give Strength to his People; i. e. Strength for the Battle, to tread down and conquer our Enemies, and make them that hate us, to flee before us.* And indeed, in this Respect God hath done great things for us; whereof we have rejoiced, and made it the Subject of our Discourses upon proper Occasions. But I shall now confine myself to the Ravishing Theme of this Day, Peace, Blessed Peace! *The Lord will bless his People, with Peace.*

In discoursing upon which Words, I shall shew you, *First, That Peace to a Kingdom or Nation, is a very great and excellent Blessing.*

Secondly, That God is the sole Author and Donor of this Blessing.

Thirdly, That the chief designed Objects of it, are such, as are his People.

First then, That Peace to a Kingdom or Nation, is a very great and excellent Blessing. Peace indeed, in all its Kinds, is a most comfortable and invaluable Blessing. Internal Peace, the Peace of Conscience, is the greatest Reward of our Holiness here; and Eternal Peace in that Kingdom of Peace above, shall be the Sum and Perfection of our Happiness hereafter. But I am to speak of External, National Peace; and this I say is a very great Blessing, yea, the greatest of Temporal Blessings that a Kingdom or Nation can enjoy. 'Tis such a voluminous and pregnant Bless.

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Vide Jer. Blessing, that it carries all other Blessings in the
2. 15. Womb of it, and seems to be but another Name for
 all that is good. 'Tis the Mother that breeds, and
 the Nurse that brings up, all other Temporal Bless-
 ings. It both gives us Mercies, and settles and
 sweetens the Enjoyment of them. For indeed, what
 are all other Blessings in the World without this?
 What are Riches, or Pleasures, or Honours, with-
 out Peace to secure them? Yea, Life it self, me-
 thinks, should be but a small Comfort to those,
Deutrom. whose Lives hang in doubt before them, and have Fear
28. 66. Day and Night, and have no Assurance of their Lives.
 The continual Fear of being depriv'd of Blessings,
 must needs take off the Sweetness and Comfort of
 them: And therefore God is pleased to promise
 this Blessing, as one of the greatest of Temporal Re-
 wards, to the Observers of his Laws: *If ye walk in*

Lev. 26.
3. 5. 6.

my Statutes, and keep my Commandments, and do them;
then ye shall dwell in your Land safely, and I will give
Peace in the Land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall
make ye afraid. And the greatest Blessing that God
 promiseth to David, (a Man after his own Heart)
 concerning his Son Solomon, (that was to be a Jedi-
 diah, the Beloved of the Lord) was, that he should
 enjoy a peaceable and quiet Reign over Israel: *His*

1 Chron.
22. 9.

Name shall be Solomon (which signifies peaceable) *and*
I will give Peace and Quietness unto Israel, in his Days.
 Well therefore might he, that had found the Sweet-
 ness and Comfort of Peace, propose this as an Argu-
 ment and Encouragement, to walk worthy of the
 Lord unto all well-pleasing, seeing, *When a Man's*

Prov. 16.

7.

Ways please the Lord, he will make even his Enemies to
be at Peace with him. So excellent in it self, so pro-
 lifick in its happy Effects, is the Blessing of Peace!

Vide Isa.
45. 7.

BUT, on the contrary, War in it self, seems to
 be a Compendium of all that is Evil, and as opposite
 to Good, as Light is to Darkness.

Job 19.
29.

'Tis threaten'd as the forest of Judgments, and
 assign'd as a Punishment proportionate to the greatness
 of

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of Sins, viz. that of Idolatry, *They chose new Gods, Judges 5. 8.*
then was War in their Gates.

BUT let us descend to Particulars, and lay before you, some of the special Blessings of Peace; and (as a Foil to its Lustre, if it needed any) shew the Miseries and Calamities of War.

P E A C E seldom fails of bringing forth *Plenty*: And therefore the Ancients did Emblem Peace, by a full Ear of Corn, and Concord by a *Cornu-copia*; an Horn full of *Plenty*. And indeed, when *Peace* is within our Walls, then, most commonly, we find *Plentifulness* within our Palaces. This was the happy Effect of a continued Peace in *Solomon's* Reign; Silver *1 Kings 10. 27.*
 was as plenty as the Stones in the Street. Peace gives Opportunity and Encouragement to the Industrious Husband-man to follow his honest Labours in the Field, to Manure and Till his Lands, and (by the Blessing of God upon his Endeavours) is repaid with a plentiful Harvest: The Vallies are so full of Corn, that they laugh and sing. *Then they beat their Swords into Plow-Shares, and their Spears into Pruning-Hooks*; and convert the Instruments of War, into Implements of Husbandry: They sow their Grounds, plant and dress their Vine-yards, and sit down every *Micah 4. 4. 5.*
Man under his Vine, and under his Fig-Tree, (sweetly enjoying the Fruits of their Labours) when none shall make them afraid.

BUT, where War rageth, there (like the *Egyptian* Catterpillers) it destroys all before it: Then the poor honest Husband-man is forced to leave his Team, and to turn his Plow-Share into a Sword again: And such as are unfit for the War, and perhaps almost as incapable of the Labours of the Field, have little *Ability*, and less *Encouragement*, to Sow or Plant, seeing, if they Sow much, they are likely to Gather but little; for the Mouth of the Sword devours all before it: And, where a numerous Army come in their March, tho' the Land be as the Garden of Eden before them (abounding with all kind of *Plenty* *Joel 2. 3.*

Gen. 49.
27.

Plenty and Pleasure) yet *behind them* it becomes as a desolate Wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them. No Safety in the Field, no Security in the House, from rapacious, plundering Soldiers: Like true *Benjamites*, they *raven as a Wolf*; in the Morning they devour the Prey, and at Night they divide the Spoil.

IN time of Peace, the rich Merchant may boldly send forth his Ships to Sea, and expect their safe Return, laden with all manner of Store; which fills his Purse, and furnishes our Houses and Tables with all the necessary and delicate Products of the remotest Parts of the World. He hath now nothing to break his Sleep, or to insure against, but the Dangers of the Seas: But in Times of War, the greatest Danger is from our Fellow-Creature, and perhaps, Fellow-Christian, who are more *cruel* than Sea-Monsters, and more *merciless* than the Waves; and then, most commonly, more are destroy'd by Fire than by Water, even in the midst of that Element: Or, at least, their own Ships must become their Prisons, and instead of making a rich Return, their Ship and Goods become a rich Voyage to a conquering Enemy.

THUS, where War rageth in a Country, 'tis in vain to claim Proprieties, or to call any thing our own by Sea or Land. The Sound of Drum and Cannon drowns the Voice of distributive Justice; and the longest Sword derives the best Right. Where Arms are Umpire, there's no such thing as *Meum* and *Tuum*; but 'tis the Language of those that carry their Law by their Sides, *All is mine that I can catch or conquer*.

BUT alas! Poverty is, many times, one of the least Evils, and most tolerable Damages of War. Skin for Skin, yea, and all that a Man hath, will he give for his Life. What is Loss of Goods, to the Loss of Life or Limb? And what Butchery and Blood-shed, what Maiming and Mangling, what Cutting

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Cutting and Killing in time of War! What Cries and Groans from wounded and dying Men in the Field of Battle! *Every Battle of the Warriour* (says the Prophet) *is with confused Noise, and Garments rolled in Blood.* Confused Noises are the Musick of a Battle, and bloody Garments the common Colours of the Field. What shall I call it? An *Aceldama*? A Field of Blood? Or, rather the Valley of *Tophet*? (which was such an Emblem of Hell that it gave a Name to it) where the Lives of so many poor Wretches must be sacrificed to some cursed Idol of Ambition, Avarice or Envy, set up in the Heart of some wicked Prince, some haughty or cruel *Nimrod*, that hunts for the Prey, or thirsts for the Blood of other Nations. And here (if the joyful Occasion of this Day would permit me) how well might I take up the Lamentation of the Prophet? *Oh! that mine Head were Waters, and mine Eyes a Fountain of Tears,* *that I might weep Day and Night, for the Slain of the Daughters of my People.* How are our *Mighty* fallen! and our young Men (the Strength and Flower of a Nation) *slain with the Sword!* And they by whom we might speak with the Enemy in the Gates, *destroy'd in the Field!* How hath their Blood been spilt like Water, and all their Bones scatter'd, *as one cutteth and cleaveth Wood upon the Earth!* How many have been forc'd away from their Native Country, and from the Embraces of their dear Friends and Relations, to meet Death, where (perhaps) they could not find a Grave, or, at least, have the Decency of a *Christian Burial* in a strange Land! How many poor Wives, hath this War made Widows! How many Children, Fatherless! Fathers, Childless! and Friends, Friendless! But I forbear: The happy Occasion of this Day so fills my Heart with Joy and Gladness, that there is no Room for a contrary Passion: Neither do I mention these things, but to increase *that*, by our reflecting upon, how many sore Evils we are now happily freed from.

Isa. 9. 5.

Jer. 9. 1.

B

BUT

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BUT to proceed: In time of Peace, *Religion* (that ought to be dearer to us than our very Lives) thrives and prospers: For then, good Kings and Queens (tho' they wanted no Good Will before) have larger Opportunities of becoming Nursing Fathers and Nursing Mothers to the Church of God; to encourage Piety and Religion, and to beat down Vice and Immorality. Then good and wholesome Laws are enacted, and strictly put in Execution; and Righteousness and Peace do mutually kiss and embrace each other. And therefore we find, that it was in the time of *Solomon's* peaceable Reign, that God's Temple was built; and that was done too, without the Noise of Axes and Hammers upon it, to signify, that Peace and Quietness are the great Promoters of Piety and Religion.

BUT in time of War and Tumults, Profaneness and Immorality do sadly prevail, and cannot be so easily curb'd and restrain'd. The Reins of Government must then be a little slacken'd, and some ill Things must of necessity be conniv'd at, even by the best and wisest of Princes, which in time of Peace would be severely punish'd: For when the Sword is so busy Abroad, it cannot be so well employ'd against the bold Sinner at Home. Then the Atheist, Deist and Free-thinker, the *Socinian* and *Arian*, the *Papist* and *Enthusiast*, take their Opportunities of propagating their cursed Tenents. This they think is the fittest time to fish for Proselytes, when they see the Waters are troubled: And then 'tis usual for all the other Enemies of the Church, to combine together against her with one Consent, promising themselves, that the Government will be so wholly concern'd for the Security of the State, in this time of Danger, that they may find the Church so unguarded, that they may now make an effectual Attack, both upon her Doctrines and Constitutions. Then the bold Sinner breaks in upon the Laws, and commits his Villanies, in hopes of Impunity; or, at the

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the worst, to come off with *that*, which he takes to be a very slight Punishment. Then the foolish Prodigal spends his Estate in riotous Living, and dreams of raising his Fortunes again by some rich Prize or plentiful Booty from the Enemy: Then the lazy Trades-man, the Drunkard and Spend-Thrift, care not how much they run in Debt, when they know how easily they can quit the Score: Then the slothful and wicked Servant leaves his Master and Employment, when he finds an easier so near at Hand, the bloody Trade of Killing of Men. These things we have been forc'd to see at Home; but, if we had been to follow these Men to their Camps and Fleets (those Nurseries of Vice, and Cages of unclean Birds) how sadly might we have seen those Seeds of Wickedness, cultivated and improved amongst them! How would it make the Heart of a good Man to bleed, to see and hear how much God is dishonoured, and his Holy Religion prophaned! What Cursing and Swearing, what Drunkenness and Debauchery, what Whoredoms and Filthiness, are committed by those Sons of *Mars*, those daring and uncontrollable Sinners! *Those Beasts of the People* (as the Psalmist calls them) *that delight in War!* God forbid indeed, that we should be thought to reflect upon an *whole* Order of Men, to whom we have been (in so great a Measure) beholden for this Day's Solemnity. Such a *general* Imputation would be highly *uncharitable* at any time, but *now* especially, would carry a great Mixture of *Ingratitude* with it. No doubt, but that there have been very good, and truly *brave* Men amongst them: Some that have been as eminent for other Virtues, as for their Courage and Conduct: And such, I am sure, are ready enough to join with us in this Complaint. For (I dare say) the Righteous Souls of some good Men amongst them, have been more vexed with the filthy Conversation of those wicked Men, than with all the Danger, Trouble and Fatigue, which that

Psal. 68.
30.

See Dr.
Good-
man's Se-
rious and
Compal-
sionate
Enquiry,
p. 42, &c.

Employment might have otherwise necessarily expos'd them to. But alas! such is the Depravity of our Natures, that (in spite of a few good Men) these Vices will be the natural Effects of a lazy Life, a loose Rein, and lewd Examples from others. And therefore, War may be justly reckon'd as one of the great Causes of so much Decay of Christian Piety and Religion among us.

YEA, War amongst Christians, doth not only hinder the *Practice* of Religion amongst our selves, but (it were as easy to demonstrate that) it also obstructs the Propagation of it Abroad in foreign Countries. It brings a *Disgrace* upon the *peaceable* Profession of our Meek and Holy Jesus, and is a stumbling Block to the *Jews*, and hinders the coming in of Fulness of the Gentiles. (But I cannot enlarge).

THUS you see that War (generally speaking) is no Friend to Religion: And yet, God forbid that we should deny the *Lawfulness* of all War (especially Defensive ones) even under the Oeconomy of the Gospel of Peace. No, as I said already, tho' it be in it self a *great Evil*, yet it may become a *very necessary* one, to prevent a *greater*. Desperate Diseases must sometimes have desperate Cures. But Oh! how happy is that poor Patient, that is at once freed from the Danger of the Distemper, and also from the trouble of a long and tedious Course of nauseous and griping Physick? And this I take to be the happy Case of our *Body Politick*: And we are this Day to return our Publick Thanksgiving for our Recovery.

THUS I have laid before you, some of the great Blessings of Peace; and, on the contrary, the direful Effects of War.

I gladly confess indeed, that we in these Kingdoms, have been far from feeling or seeing *all* those dismal Effects of it. We have in some Measure enjoy'd the Benefits of Peace all the time of the War: Especially, the Heavens have smiled upon us, and
God

God hath blessed us with fruitful Harvests and salubrious Seasons; so far at least, that a pining Famine and the noisome Pestilence (the usual Concomitants of War) have been far from our Dwellings, praised be God for the same. But we cannot but *know* (tho' we are loath to *remember*) what a vast deal of Blood and Treasure hath been spilt and spent in this tedious, cruel, and expensive War: What Complaintings have we heard in our Streets for the Decay of Trade! and how severely have some amongst us felt the Effects of it, and Poverty, like an armed Man, hath overtaken them! What Apprehensions did we, once especially, labour under, that our Enemies *Abroad* (by the traiterous Assistance of *worse* Enemies at *Home*) might have prevail'd in their Designs of translating the War into our own Borders, and with it, the Miseries and Calamities of Intestine Broils! (Tho', thanks be to the Divine Providence, he that sitteth in the Heavens hath laughed them to scorn, and, we hope, will still have them in Derision). And what Burdens it must for some time lay upon our Estates, we cannot but be sensible of, tho' we are resolved cheerfully to undergo it: Especially, since we begin to feel already, how much our Shoulders are eas'd of their wonted Load.

IN a Word, the Evils that we have *felt* and *fear'd*, have been very great: But tho', perhaps, they have not been *comparable* to what our Enemies have groan'd under, who have been forced to see the fatal Tragedies of War acted upon their own Stage; yet, if it was but for *their* Sakes, we ought to be glad that those Calamities are over-past. We ought indeed to rejoice for our *own* Mercies, but not meerly for *their* Miseries. 'Tis what the great Law of Christian Charity is so far from *allowing*, that it *injoyns* the contrary: And I question not, but that in the midst of our Rejoycings for the Slaughter of our Enemies, many a good and tender hearted Christians have been
ready

ready to mingle some silent Tears with their Blood ; and privately sighed out that of the Prophet for the *Philistines*, *O ! thou Sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet ! Put up thy self into the Scabbard, rest and be still.* This you see the Prophet does, under *that* Dispensation ; and 'tis no more than what (we find in History) many good-natur'd *Heathens* have also done : And I am sure, we have a greater Example and plainer Precepts for it, in the Life and Doctrine of the Compassionate Jesus in the Gospel. And, as it is a Temper that well-becometh us, as we are Christians ; so, whatever some Men may think, 'tis no way inconsistent with the truest Valour, unless they could teach us to distinguish between Manhood and Humanity. How well then, doth it become us (for *their* Sakes as well as for *our own*) to rejoyce this Day, that a Stop is put to the Effusion of so much Christian Blood, and the Sword forbidden to devour any more ? And how thankful ought we to be, to the Divine Author of those Blessings ? Which leads me to the Second Particular : (Of which, and also of the third, very briefly.)

IT is the Lord that bleisseth his People with Peace. The Power of making Peace and War, is originally the sole Prerogative of him, that is *King of Kings, and the only Ruler of Princes.* Tho' his Vice-gerent over us, and (under her) her wise Council and victorious Arms, have been the happy Instruments, yet God, and God alone, must have the chieftest Glory of ordaining this Peace for us. It is *he that*

Psal. 46. *maketh Wars to cease unto the Ends of the Earth ; he*
 9. *breaketh the Bow, and cutteth the Spear in sunder ; he*
 burneth the Chariot in the Fire. And when he giveth

Job 34.
 29. *Quietness, who then can make Trouble ? Can the Machavillian Policy, or most artful Contrivances of wicked Men, cause War and Tumults, when the Goodness and Wisdom of God say, There shall be Peace and Quietness to such a Kingdom or Nation ? No surely ; we have this Day an happy Instance to*

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the contrary. *There is no Wisdom, nor Understanding, nor Counsel, against the Lord.* He ruleth in the Counsels of Princes; and tho' there be many Devices in the Hearts of Men, yet the Counsel of the Lord that shall stand. Or, if they do foolishly design it, their Power can never effect it, without his Leave and Permission. *He can easily disappoint the Devices of the Crafty, so that their Hands cannot perform their Enterprize.* And as God hath the Head and Hands of Men in his Hand, so the Hearts and Wills of all Men too, are at his Disposal; and he turneth the Hearts of Kings (as well as other Men) *as the Rivers of Waters.* He hath turned the Heart of a Prince (who hath been so long an Enemy to Peace) at last to hearken to the Cries and Groans of his People, and to sue for one; and he hath inclined the Heart of a wise and merciful Princess to grant it, upon Just and Honourable Terms. *This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our Eyes.* And as it is he that giveth us our Peace, so tis he that must preserve this Peace to us.

Prov. 21.
30.

Job. 5.
12.

FOR if the Almighty should not still put a Check to the unruly Passions, and boundless Ambition of wicked Princes, Plow-shares would quickly be turned into Swords, and Pruning-hooks into Spears again. But we doubt not, but that as *the Wrath of Man hath turned to his Praise*, so, *The Remainder of Wrath he will still restrain.*

Psal. 76.
10.

LET us proceed to the last thing, viz. The special Objects of this Blessing: *He will bless his People with Peace.* And surely, seeing Peace is one of the greatest of Temporal Blessings, *Godliness*, (which hath the Promise of this Life as well as of the Life that is to come) will entitle us to it, as far forth as the Divine Wisdom shall see it good and convenient for us, and conducive to the promoting of our Eternal Peace in the World to come. Not indeed but that wicked Men do enjoy this in common with good Men; or, at the least, they may come in for a Share in those Blessings which God bestows upon a King-

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Kingdom or Nation, for the sake of some good Men that are in it. But alas! These Blessings do change their Nature; as they fall upon Wicked Men, they cease to be real Blessings: They do but fatten them for the Slaughter; and that which should be for their Good, becomes to them an Occasion of falling. They abuse the Goodness and Mercy of God towards them, fight against him with his own Weapons; and all that Ease and Rest, Plenty and Pleasure, which Peace brings along with it, are basely employ'd in the Service of Sin, and in waging War against the blessed Author of it. But as to good Men, Temporal Blessings are *Real Blessings* to them; they have them with the Love and Favour of God; they taste of his Goodness in them, employ them to his Glory, and improve them to their own Spiritual Advantage. Their Temporal Peace is to them a Type and Pledge of a Coelestial one, and of that Rest that remaineth for the Children of God; and in the mean time, gives them Encouragement, Means and Opportunities, of preparing for it, and making themselves, in some measure, happy beforehand, in the pleasant Prospect and Contemplation of it.

THUS I have spoken to the several Propositions contained in these Words, *He will bless his People with Peace*. What remaineth, is to draw some Inferences from what hath been said, and then to recommend you to the Grace of God.

1st, Then: If Peace be such a great Blessing, how *provoking* have our Sins been, that have caused God to with-hold this Blessing so long from us! Our own Sins have been the Troublers of our *Israel*, that have kept back this Good from us all this while. There may be, indeed, many Causes or Occasions of Wars and Tumults in a Kingdom or Nation, but the chief Reason is, because *God himself* hath a Controversy with them. *Because they have walked contrary to him, God also walketh contrary to them, and bringeth*

Levir. 26.
24, 25.

a *Sword* upon them, that shall *avenge* the Quarrel of his Covenant. Tho' the War may be ever so unjust in respect of Men's Intentions; yet 'tis always righteous in respect of God's Permission. He maketh use of wicked Men as the Executioners of his Wrath; and, like an incensed Father, sometimes imployes a Slave to correct a Child, that hath highly provoked him.

THE Wicked (says the Psalmist) *are but a Sword* Psal. 17.
13.
in God's Hand: And how provoking may we think have the Offences of a Child been, when we see the Rod of his Father's Displeasure so long upon him! Our Heavenly Father hath been now pleased to remove this Judgment from us: But can we comfortably hope, that our Repentance for the Evil of our Sins against him, hath prevailed upon God, to repent him of the Evil of Punishment against us? And that our Peace with our Enemies, is the blessed Effect of God's being reconciled unto us? Then we have reason to rejoyce indeed: Then, we may be sure, 'twill be a real Blessing, and continued as such, to us and our Posterity. But if we have not, or do not continue to repent, and to bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance, we may justly fear that the Almighty hath some heavier Judgments, (Judgments indeed worthy of God) still in store for us. For, when Judgments are remov'd, and Men's Lives not re-form'd, they are not remov'd in Mercy, but in Anger: They do but leave room for some *severer Punishment*. Let us therefore take the Advice of our Blessed Saviour, *Go, and sin no more*, or else we have too just a reason to fear, that *a worse thing will happen unto us*.

IF we have not heard the Rod, and him that hath appointed it, we can expect no other but to be beaten with *Scorpions*: That his Hand will be stretched out still, and he will punish us seven times more for our Sins.

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2^{dly}, SEEING God is the Author of this Blessing to him, and him alone, let us return our profound Thanks and Praises for what we now enjoy; and apply our selves, by our hearty Prayers, for the Continuance of the same, for the time to come.

GOD is jealous of his Honour, and his Glory will he not give to another: And therefore, when he hath done such great Things for us, whereof we have such Reason to rejoyce, he justly expects the Tribute of our heartiest Thanksgivings and Praises for the same. God indeed expects, that we should take Notice of *all* his Dealings with us; and behave our selves accordingly; And as, when he smiteth us, we ought to be *grieved* for the Tokens of his Displeasure, so, when he is pleased to *smile* upon us, we ought to *rejoyce*, for the Manifestations of his Love. And surely, 'tis hard to distinguish, which argues the greatest Obstinacy and Sullenness of Temper in a Child, to disregard the *Frowns*, or to neglect the *Favours* of a Father.

LET me therefore call upon you in the Words of the Psalmist, *Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem: Praise thy God, O Zion. For he hath strengthened the Bars of thy Gates: He hath blessed thy Children within thee. He maketh Peace in thy Borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the Wheat.* God hath *rejoiced* over us to do us Good; Oh! let us *rejoyce* in the Lord for his Mercy and Goodness, and again, I say, *rejoyce*. This is the way to engage God to *continue* and *increase* his Blessings upon us, when he seeth us so sensible of his Goodness, and so thankful for Mercies already receiv'd.

'TIS the Observation of one, that most of those Psalms wherein the Holy Psalmist implores help from God against his Enemies, are closed with Thanksgiving and Praise for former Deliverances. Let us use the same Holy Policy (as I may call it) in our Dealing with the Almighty: Seeing God doth all things for his own Glory, let us shew how ready

Psalm. 147.
12, 13, 14.

Muis in
Psalm. 10.
16.

ready we will be to comply with his glorious Design; and, by the quick Return of our heartiest Thanks for Mercies already receiv'd, give in an Assurance, how careful we will be to render him the Glory of his future Mercies, when the same Goodness shall be pleased to bestow them upon us. Otherways, how can we expect to speed in our calling upon him in the Day of Trouble, for the time to come, when he hath already delivered us, and we have not Glorified him? Let our Souls therefore magnify the Lord, and let us praise him with the best Member that we have. Yea, and let our Hands also give Testimony to our Gratitude. *Seeing our Goodness cannot extend immediately to him, let us express our Thankfulness by our Kindness, and Benefaction to the Saints, to the Excellent that are on the Earth. This is a Day of Rejoycing before the Lord. Let us eat the Fat, and drink the Sweet, and send Portions to them, for whom nothing is prepared. Let the Fatherless rejoyce with us, and let us cause the Heart of the Widow to sing for Joy. Let the Poor begin to feel that there is a Peace, as well as those that have born the Burden of the War. In a Word, let our Zeal for God's Glory, and our Charity to our Brethren, be hotter than our Bon-fires: Let the sincere Praises of our Souls, ascend higher than our loudest Acclamations: Let us not drink away our Healths by wanton Excesses, nor offer an abominable Swine upon our Altar of Praise; but let us receive the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord.*

Plal. 16.

2. 3.

Nehem.

8. 10.

Hester

9. 22.

NEXT to the Divine Majesty himself, he is pleased to allow us, yea, and to command us too, to express our Gratitude to all those whom he is pleased to make the happy Instruments of conveying those Blessings to us: Especially to such Publick Benefactors, whom he is pleased to place next to himself in Authority, and in the Power of doing Good to the World.

SEEING

The Blessing of PEACE.

Acts 24.
3.

SEEING then, we may (without the least Suspicion of Flattery) truly say, *That we enjoy great Quietness, and that such worthy Deeds are done to this Nation by her Majesty's Providence, let us accept it always, and in all places, with all Thankfulness.* And let us shew our Gratitude by our reverential Love to her sacred Person, and Zeal for her wise and auspicious Government; by our intire Confidence in her Wisdom and Goodness, Care and Conduct over us; and especially by our hearty Prayers for her, that the chief Blessings of this Peace which she hath procured for us, may fall on her own Head here, and everlasting Peace in that Kingdom which cannot be shaken for ever hereafter.

BUT to proceed: And as we ought to render the Divine Goodness, our heartiest Praises for the Mercies which we do enjoy; so let us not fail to continue our earnest Prayers for the Continuance of them. Pray, Oh! Pray, for the Peace of our *Jerusalem*; they shall prosper that love her.

2 Kings
2. 12.
Psal. 56.

HERE is a way, by which the meanest and weakest of us, may become Friends, Yea, and Patriots to our Country. Tho' perhaps we cannot fight for it, we can wrestle with God in Prayer for it: And tho' we cannot advise about its Safety, yet we can engage the Wisdom of the Almighty for our Protection and Welfare; without which, all human Endeavours would prove ineffectual. These *Spiritual Weapons* of our Warfare, will become mighty thro' God. *Elijah* was a Man that was earnest and fervent in Prayer, and therefore might well be stiled *the Chariot of Israel and the Horsemen thereof*: Pious *David* had often found the effect of his Prayers in this respect: *When I cry unto thee (says he) then shall mine Enemies be turned back: this I know for God is with me.* This, I say is the way to engage the Almighty on our side: And if God be for us, who can be against us and prevail?

LAST.

The Blessing of PEACE.

21

L A S T L Y, Seeing the chief designed Objects of this Blessing are such as are God's People, we may easily learn what is the ready way to secure the continuance of it, to us and our Posterity; Let us continue to be *his People*, and the Sheep of his Pasture, and God will still continue to be a faithful *Shepherd* over us. The Lord God will be a Sun and Shield, will give Grace and Glory, and no good thing will be with-held from us, if we walk uprightly. More especially, my Brethren, if we would have God to continue this Blessing to us, let us carefully Answer the wise Ends, and blessed Designs of the Almighty, in sending it down upon us. Hath our God wonderfully appeared for us, in the *defence* of our Church, and in the *securing* our Holy Religion in a Protestant Succession to the Crown? Let this excite our Zeal, and inflame our Love towards it. Contend we now earnestly for this Faith, which was once delivered to the Saints of old, and now (thanks be to God) in our peaceable Possession and quiet Enjoyment. And let us by our Holy and Exemplary Lives, adorn this Doctrine of our Lord and Saviour in all things, which he hath at all times, so miraculously preserv'd for us. And oh! that this might be the happy Effect of our Peace, *that we being delivered from the Hands of our Enemies, (as well Temporal as Spiritual) may serve him without fear, in Holiness and Righteousness before him all the Days of our Life.*

Luke 1.
74. 75.

C A N we now sit down under our own Vine, and under our own Fig-Tree, and call them securely our own? Let us be contented with what the good Providence of Heaven hath allotted and secured to us. Let us by no means invade one another's Right, or endeavour, by injurious and vexatious Law-Suits, to obtain as unjust a Decision over a poor Brother, as perhaps the Sword of War (where 'tis sole Umpire) uses to make. And Oh! that no private War might arise in our Hearts; but that all our Home-Quarrels,

Quarrels, whether about Civil or Sacred Matters, might be now laid aside, and amicably hush'd up in this publick Peace.

AND indeed (to conclude) the best way to secure this Peace with our Enemies *Abroad*, is to labour to maintain the strictest Unity, Peace, and Concord, amongst our selves at *Home*. This seems to be one great Reason, why the Almighty hath so long detained this Blessing, because we have been so loath to be at Peace with one another. *Manasseh* hath been *against* Ephraim, and Ephraim *against* Manasseh, and they together *against* Judah, (tho' all for the main Professors of the same Religion) for *all this*, his Anger hath not been turned away, but his Hand hath been stretched out still. God is now pleased to try, what fairer Means will do; and whether we will be drawn by the Cords of his Love towards us, to the great Duties of Love and Unity among our selves. This, this I say again, is the only way to secure this great Blessing to us. Let us labour to be of one Mind, and live in Peace; and the God of Love and Peace will be with us: And his Presence will be our greatest Comfort, and our surest Defence. Yea (besides this special Blessing of Heaven upon us) this must needs be the only effectual way to secure the Peace, or at least not to fear the Enmity of any Foreign Adversary in the World. For could they but find our Jerusalem so at Unity within it self, that they could by no means divide us; what Encouragement could they have to attempt any thing against us, when the only fatal Engine by which they have at any time prevail'd against us, would be so sure to fail them.

THUS, if we stand fast in one Spirit, with one Mind, striving together for the Faith of the Gospel, we need not to be in nothing terrify'd by our Adversaries. Yea, our Jerusalem would rather become terrible to them as an Army with Banners.

THESE

The Blessing of PEACE.

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THESE indeed are Duties that were never *more necessary and seasonable*; and yet, alas! never seem'd to be less *studied and practised* among us, than at present. And therefore our wise and religious Princess hath so earnestly recommended them from the Throne, to both her Houses of Parliament; and in them, to all of us, in our Inferiour Stations:

“ Now we are entring upon Peace Abroad, let me
 “ conjure you all (*says her Majesty*) to use your ut-
 “ most Endeavours for calming Men's Minds at
 “ Home, that the Arts of Peace may be cultivated.
 “ Let not groundless Jealousies, contriv'd by a Fa-
 “ ction, and fomented by Party-Rage, effect that,
 “ which our Foreign Enemies could not”. And
 surely, whatever some Men may think, or would
 perswade us to the contrary, this would be the best
 way of shewing our selves Good Christians, Loyal
 Subjects, and wise Men. *For (says the Apostle)*
he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to
God, and approved of Men. Let us therefore follow
after the things, which make for Peace; and things,
wherewith one may edify another. And to our earnest
 Endeavours in our several Places and Stations, let
 us joyn our constant and fervent Prayers.

See her Majesty's
 Gracious
 Speech,
 April 9.
 1713.

Rom. 14.
 18, 19.

LET us conclude with that excellent Prayer, which we have been using during the War, and still seems too seasonable for us;

“ **O** Heavenly Father, the God of Peace
 “ and Love; dispose the Hearts of
 “ all Orders and Conditions of Men amongst
 “ us, to Christian Charity, Humility, and
 “ Forbearance of one another, in the Spirit
 “ of Meekness: That no Sedition may
 “ disturb this State, nor Schisms distract this
 “ Church:

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“ Church: But as we are Members of the
 “ same Body, and Professors of the same
 “ Faith and Hope; so we may, with one
 “ Heart, and one Mouth, glorify thee, thro’
 “ our only Mediator Jesus Christ.

*To whom, with the Father, and the Holy
 Ghost, Three Persons, and one God, be ascribed
 all Honour, Power, Might, Majesty, and Do-
 minion, henceforth and for ever more. Amen.*



F I N I S.

